

**A Tree
Identification
Booklet
for South**

Carolina Forests

Lobed Simple Leaf



Blackjack Oak

Pin Oak

Post Oak

Red Maple

Sassafras

Southern Red Oak

Sweetgum

Sycamore

Turkey Oak

Water Oak

White Oak

Yellow Poplar

Blackjack Oak

(Quercus marilandica)
Height 20-50'

Characteristics: The leaves are up to 7 inches long, leathery, with a brown, very hairy under-surface. Examine the leaves to observe that they are slightly triangular, broadest near the tip. Blackjack oak is often a short, contorted tree, growing on poor soils.

Location: This tree grows on dry sandy and clay soils in upland ridges and slopes.

Use: The wood is used for firewood and charcoal and railroad cross-ties. The acorns are food for turkey and deer.

FUN TREE FACT: The common name "blackjack" may refer to the leaf's shape similar to a blackjack, a leather covered bludgeon.

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Pin Oak

"Swamp Oak"
(Quercus palustris)
Height 50-90'

Characteristics: The leaves have 5 to 7 lobes, are very deeply cleft and sharply pointed. The central trunk, or stem, is generally straight and does not fork. The leaves turn ruby-red in the fall.

Location: Look for this oak on poorly drained, wet sites including clay soils on level uplands.

Use: It is a graceful shade and street tree. The acorns are relished by deer, wild turkey, and ducks.

FUN TREE FACT: Named for the many spur-like twigs, called pins, that grow on the main branches.

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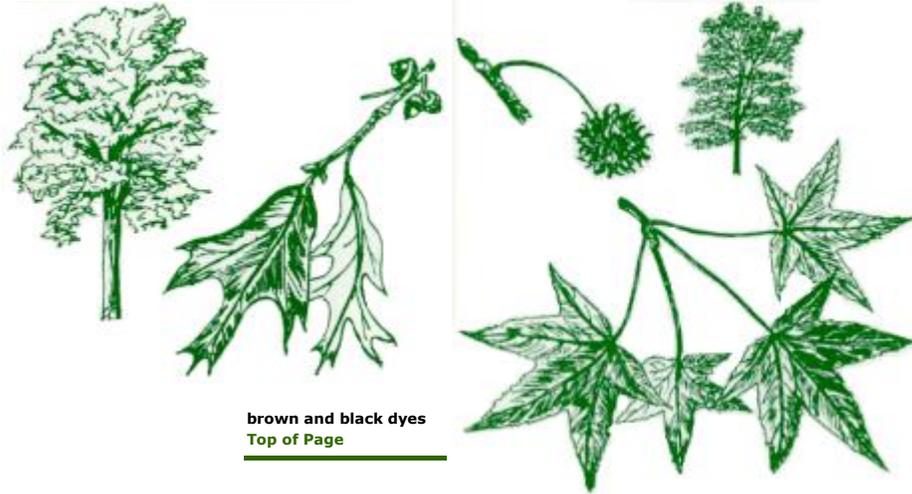
Post Oak



"Iron Oak"
 (*Quercus stellata*)
 Height 30-70'
Characteristics: The distinctive leaves suggest a Maltese cross. This tree is sometimes a shrub. The branches and upper limbs are often twisted and gnarled. The leaves are shiny dark-green and slightly rough above and gray-green beneath with star-shaped hairs.
Location: The post oak grows on sandy, gravelly, and rocky ridges as well as moist loamy soils of flood plains.
Use: The heart wood is very heavy, hard, and durable in contact with soil. It is used for railroad cross-ties. It has been used for fenceposts, hence its common name "post oak".

FUN TREE FACT: The post oak and blackjack oak form the Cross Timbers in Texas and Oklahoma, the forest border of small trees and transition zone to prairie grassland.

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Red Maple

"Scarlet Maple", "Swamp Maple"
 (*Acer rubrum*)
 Height 60-90'
Characteristics: This tree has red flowers, fruit, leafstalks, and autumn foliage. The leaves grow opposite on the leafstalk. They have 3 lobes (sometimes 2 smaller lobes near the base) and are coarsely-toothed on the edges. Red maple is brilliant scarlet, orange, or bright yellow in the autumn.
Location: Red maple is a very common tree in the forest. It grows well on moist soils of stream banks, valleys, and dry ridges.
Use: The buds and seeds are favorite food for squirrels and songbirds. It is a handsome shade tree.
FUN TREE FACT: Pioneers made ink and cinnamon from a red maple bark extract.

brown and black dyes
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Sassafras

(*Sassafras albidum*)
 Height 30-60'
Characteristics: Several different leaf shapes can be found on a single plant. Leaves are elliptical, often with 2 mitten-shaped lobes or 3 broad and blunt lobes. They are shiny green on top.
Location: Sassafras grows on moist, particularly sandy soils, often in old fields, clearings, and forest openings.
Use: Roots and root bark supply oil of sassafras (used to perfume soap) and sassafras tea.
FUN TREE FACT: Sassafras has been used to flavor root beer. The fall color makes this tree a valuable addition to any landscape.
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Southern Red Oak

"Spanish Oak" "Swamp Red Oak"
 (*Quercus falcata*)
 Height 50-80'
Characteristics: The leaves of the southern red oak have a bell-shaped base, are 5-9" long with 3-7 deep lobes. The center lobe is considerably longer than the others and quite narrow. There are bristle tips (tiny hairs) on the end of each lobe. (You will not find these bristle tips on the end of the white oak leaf.)
Location: Look for the southern red oak in upland areas on dry ridgetops and slopes facing south and west. It prefers dry, sandy or clay soils.
Use: Southern red oak is a high-grade wood for furniture, flooring, veneer, and other useful and beautiful products.
FUN TREE FACT: Called the "Spanish oak" possibly because it commonly occurs in areas of the early Spanish colonies.
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Sweetgum

"Redgum", "Sappgum"
 (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
 Height 60-100'
Characteristic: The leaves are star-shaped or maplelike, with 5 to 7 long-pointed, finely saw-toothed lobes. The fruit is a "gum-ball" consisting of many individual fruits, each ending in curved prickly points.
Location: Sweetgum is common throughout the state, especially in moist bottomlands.
Use: It is an important timber tree for crossties, furniture, pulpwood, and plywood. The buds and seeds provide food for squirrels and chipmunks. Bobwhite quail, doves, and ducks eat seeds that drop to the ground.
FUN TREE FACT: In pioneer days, gum was obtained from the trunk by peeling the bark and scraping off the resin-like solid. This gum was commonly chewed prior to the development of commercial chewing gum.
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Sycamore

(*Platanus occidentalis*)
Height 60-100'

Characteristics: The sycamore is one of the largest eastern hardwoods. It is easily recognized because of its multicolored, mottled bark. The leaves are 4 -7" long, broad with palmate veining and toothed edges. The fruit is a 1" brown ball hanging on a long stalk.

Location: This tree grows on wet soils of stream banks, flood plains, and edges of lakes and swamps.

Use: The sycamore wood is used for furniture parts, millwork, flooring, specialty products such as butcher blocks, particle board, and fiberboard. Sycamore also makes a good shade tree

Sycamore bark peels because the older outer bark layer is trunk expands, the bark cracks, exposing the whitish inner

FUN TREE FACT: inelastic. As the bark.

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Turkey

"Scrub Oak"
Height 20-40'

Characteristics: shrub. The leaves are 4-8" long. The

Location: Turkey the coast.

Use: Provides food

FUN TREE FACT: suggesting a especially after

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Oak

(*Quercus laevis*)

This tree has crooked branches, an open crown and is often a have 3-5 long narrow lobes each with 1-3 bristle-tipped teeth and base of the leaf is pointed.

oaks grow in dry sandy soils on ridges and dunes, especially near and cover for wildlife on dry sandy soils.

The name turkey oak refers to the 3-lobed shape of the leaf turkey foot. The tree spreads by underground runners, frequent fires.

Water Oak

"Spotted Oak"
(*Quercus nigra*)
Height 50-80'

Characteristics: The water oak's small spatula-shaped leaves (2-4" long) remain green into mid-winter and gradually fall in late winter. They sometimes show three indistinct lobes. The acorn is small and almost black.

Location: This oak prefers the moist soils found in lowlands.

Use: The wood is strong but splits during drying making it suitable only for rough lumber.

FUN TREE FACT: Compared to other oaks, the water oak is short-lived, only 70 years or less. Also this species is easily damaged or killed by fire.

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9 lobes and smooth margins. In the fall red color then fade to various shades of which forms broad scaly plates. The

Location: White oaks grow well on all soils, but do best on deep, well-drained

Use: The white oak's high-grade wood barrels. White oak acorns are a choice

FUN TREE FACT: Called "Stave Oak" outstanding in making tight important in shipbuilding.

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White Oak

(*Quercus alba*)
Height 80-100'

Characteristics: Leaves have 7 to look for the leaves to turn a wine-brown. Notice the light-gray bark acorn is egg shaped and 3/4" long. soils except the driest, shallow loamy soils.

is useful for furniture, flooring, and food for squirrels and birds.

because the wood is barrels. In colonial times it was

Yellow-Poplar

"Tuliptree"
(*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
Height 80-150'

Characteristics: One of the tallest (sometimes 200'), and most beautiful eastern hardwoods. The large showy flowers resemble tulips or lilies. The leaves are composed of four large lobes and are about as wide as they are long.

Location: Look for this tree on well-drained soils, especially valleys and slopes.

Use: Yellow poplar is one of the chief commercial hardwoods for furniture, crates, toys, musical instruments and pulpwood.

FUN TREE FACT: Pioneers hollowed out a single log to make a long lightweight canoe. It is told that very tall (200') poplars existed in the primeval forests.

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